



Secretariat

ST/AI/411
18 September 1995

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management

Subject: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

1. The purpose of the present administrative instruction is to establish a performance appraisal system (PAS), pursuant to staff rule 112.6, as amended to implement General Assembly resolution 49/222 A, section I. The PAS shall apply to all staff members, up to and including Under-Secretaries-General, holding appointments of at least one year under the 100 series of the Staff Rules.

2. The PAS is designed to encourage a higher level of involvement and motivation by inviting staff participation in the planning, delivery and evaluation of work. The new system establishes a process for achieving responsibility and accountability in the execution of programmes approved by the General Assembly. It is based on linking individual work plans with those of departments and offices and entails setting goals, planning work in advance and providing ongoing feedback. An important function of the PAS is to promote communication between staff members and supervisors on the goals to be achieved, and the basis on which individual performance will be assessed, encouraging team work in the process.

Appraisal period

3. Except as provided in paragraphs 4 to 6 below, appraisals shall be made on an annual cycle, to begin on 1 January or 1 April of each year. The head of each department or office shall decide on the commencement date, based on the needs of that department or office, and shall inform the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management of that decision.

4. When a staff member takes up new duties upon recruitment, transfer or assignment in the course of the performance year, an individual work plan shall be established, a mid-point review conducted and an appraisal made for the period between the beginning of the new duties and the end of the performance year, if such period is six months or more.



5. When a staff member or his or her supervisor is reassigned or transferred from a department or office, or is separated from service, an appraisal shall be made for the period between the beginning of the performance year and the reassignment, transfer or separation, if such period is six months or more.

6. A staff member may request a special evaluation report in respect of an assignment of less than six months in another work unit or on mission. Such a report should be consistent with the principles of the PAS. The report should state what was expected of the staff member and whether this was discussed by the staff member and the supervisor. The supervisor should appraise the performance and give an overall performance rating consistent with the rating system set out in paragraph 19 below. Special evaluation reports shall be included in the official status file of the staff member concerned.

Establishment of individual work plans

7. Prior to the beginning of the performance year, heads of department or office meet with the senior managers under their direct supervision, 1/ and, on the basis of the work plan for that department or office, define and delegate specific goals which will be the foundation for the individual work plan of each senior manager. In the light of their own work plans, those senior managers define and delegate individual goals to the staff under their direct supervision, after appropriate discussion. A similar process is repeated until every staff member has met with his or her supervisor to discuss the individual work plan of the staff member concerned. Supervisors may meet with the staff in their work unit either as a group or individually.

8. Individual work plans briefly describe the goals and specific actions for which the staff member is responsible during the performance year, together with the quantitative and qualitative dimensions required to carry out the individual work plan, on the basis of which the performance of each staff member will be evaluated.

9. Each staff member prepares, in a timely manner, a draft work plan to reflect the results of the meeting with his or her supervisor. The supervisor reviews the draft and, if necessary, clarifies possible misunderstandings as to the performance expected of the staff member. When agreement is reached, the supervisor finalizes and approves the individual work plan. If no agreement can be reached on the individual work plan, the matter is referred for further discussion and decision by the higher-level official in the department or office who will be the second appraising officer of the staff member concerned. 2/ The higher-level official may request the assistance of the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office, if required. If necessary, the matter may be referred to the head of department or office for final decision.

Mid-year performance review

10. In the middle of each performance year, the supervisor reviews with each staff member the manner in which the individual work plan has been carried out, and provides performance feedback and guidance for the accomplishment of the goals set out in the work plan. At that time, the work plan may be revised if

there have been significant changes in the nature of the functions carried out by the staff member, or if such revision is required to pursue revised goals of the work unit.

11. Staff members and supervisors are encouraged to take initiative to discuss work performance whenever needed in the course of the performance year, in addition to the mid-year performance review.

12. In the light of the mid-year performance review, the supervisor may raise with the Management Review Committee any particular problem that can be foreseen for the year-end performance appraisal.

13. The Management Review Committee is a committee established in each department or office to provide leadership for the application of the PAS within that department or office. It seeks to ensure consistency in appraisals and ratings, and to maintain effective management of the planning and appraisal process throughout the department or office. Lower-level committees may be established if required by the needs of the department or office concerned. Management Review Committees are composed of managers and supervisors across work units within each department or office.

Year-end performance appraisal

14. The supervisor and the staff member meet at the end of the performance year to assess whether the individual work plan was carried out fully, was exceeded or was not met. Prior to the meeting, the staff member may prepare a preliminary assessment of the manner in which he or she has carried out the work plan defined at the beginning of the performance year. After discussion with the staff member and, in doubtful cases, with the second appraising officer, the supervisor prepares an appraisal of work plan performance and related aspects of the staff member's performance during the year, including compliance with the PAS process. The supervisor determines an overall appraisal rating based on the scale defined in paragraph 19 below and, if appropriate, provides overall comments. The staff member then has the opportunity to record on the performance appraisal form his or her comments on the overall performance appraisal and on the supervisor's compliance with the PAS process.

15. The second-level supervisor, acting as second appraising officer, reviews the performance appraisal form, makes comments, if desired, and signs the form.

16. The Management Review Committee reviews the comments and overall appraisal ratings with a view to ensuring the effective application of the PAS throughout the department or office concerned. The Committee may comment on the appraisal process, including the manner in which the first and second appraising officers have implemented the PAS. Any such comments shall be taken into account in determining the appraisal ratings of the first and second appraising officers.

17. After review by the Management Review Committee, the performance appraisal form is signed by the chairperson of the Committee and forwarded to the first appraising officer, who communicates it to the staff member. The staff member receives, signs and dates the form. Signature on the form only documents that the staff member has received it and does not reflect his or her views regarding

the appraisal. The first appraising officer forwards the completed form to the appropriate executive or personnel office for administrative processing and inclusion in the staff member's official status file.

Responsibility for timely execution of the PAS

18. Subject to paragraph 9 above, primary responsibility for the timely execution of the PAS, including completion of the PAS forms, rests with the supervisor. However, it is in the interest of each staff member to cooperate as much as possible by providing in a timely manner a draft individual work plan, and by being available for scheduled discussions with the supervisor for the mid-year review and the year-end appraisal. Staff members are reminded that they and supervisors are accountable for timely compliance and execution of the PAS process, and that supervisors must proceed and finalize the forms even when it is not possible to obtain the input of the staff member concerned.

Rating system

19. The PAS offers five possible ratings, from 1, the highest, to 5, the lowest.

Rating 1 applies to staff whose performance has consistently exceeded performance expectations.

Rating 2 applies to staff whose performance has frequently exceeded performance expectations.

Rating 3 applies to staff whose performance has fully met performance expectations.

Rating 4 applies to staff whose performance has partly met performance expectations.

Rating 5 applies to staff whose performance has not met performance expectations.

20. Ratings 1, 2 and 3 establish satisfaction with the work performed and shall be so viewed when staff members having received those ratings are considered for renewal of fixed-term appointment or selection for a post at the same or a higher level, without prejudice to the principle that such decisions remain within the discretionary authority of the Secretary-General. Ratings 4 and 5 document the existence of shortcomings, which may call for specific remedial training or for a development plan based on the particular needs of the staff member. Rating 4 may justify withholding of the within-grade increment, particularly if the same rating is given for a second consecutive year. Rating 5 may lead to a number of administrative actions, such as transfer to a different post or functions, withholding of within-grade increment, non-renewal of fixed-term contract or termination for unsatisfactory service.

Joint monitoring of the PAS

21. In each department or office, a Joint Monitoring Committee, composed of two management nominees, two staff nominees from the department or office, and a chairperson nominated by the head of the department or office in consultation with the staff, shall be established. The Committee shall meet during the performance year to monitor the implementation of the PAS by the department or office concerned with respect to the timeliness of the process, its procedures and overall results. Joint Monitoring Committees shall report to a Global Joint Monitoring Committee, composed of two members appointed by the Secretary-General, two nominated by the staff, and a chairperson appointed by the Secretary-General after staff consultation. The Global Joint Monitoring Committee shall consider the policy issues involved and prepare a report with appropriate recommendations to the Secretary-General through the Staff Management Coordination Committee. The joint monitoring mechanism shall remain in force for the three years following the full implementation of the PAS.

Establishment of rebuttal panels

22. In consultation with the staff representatives of the department or office concerned, the head of the department or office, or his/her representative, shall draw up a list of rebuttal panel members composed of three groups of staff members from the department or office concerned, in equal numbers. The list shall be composed as follows:

- (a) Rebuttal panel members designated by the head of the department or office;
- (b) Rebuttal panel members nominated by the staff of the department or office, through an election that should identify at least twice the number of individuals required for this particular group;
- (c) Rebuttal panel chairpersons, selected by the head of the department or office after consultation with the staff representatives of that department or office.

The approved list, subdivided as indicated above, shall comprise nine individuals in all for large departments or offices and six for smaller departments or offices. Every effort shall be made to obtain an appropriate geographical and gender balance, where possible. The head of department or office shall inform the staff member in writing of the composition of the approved list.

23. Rebuttal panel members shall serve for a two-year term. In the event a member of the rebuttal panel is assigned to functions outside the department or office concerned, he or she shall be replaced in accordance with the procedure relevant for the group to which the rebuttal panel member belongs.

24. In small offices, where it may be difficult to constitute a list from the staff members of that office, the approved list may include staff members from other Secretariat offices at the same duty station, provided those staff members

have the knowledge and experience required to review the appraisal and its rating.

Rebuttal process

25. Staff members who disagree with the performance rating given at the end of the performance year may, within 30 days of signing the completed performance appraisal form, submit to their Executive Office at Headquarters, or to the Chief of Administration elsewhere, a written rebuttal statement setting forth briefly the specific reasons why a higher rating should have been given. Staff members having received the highest performance rating of 1 may not initiate a rebuttal. The rebuttal statement shall contain the names of the three individuals, one from each of the three groups identified in paragraph 22 above, whom the staff member has selected to serve on the rebuttal panel. A copy of the rebuttal statement shall be placed in the staff member's official status file.

26. After receiving a copy of the rebuttal statement, the head of department or office, or his/her representative, shall promptly prepare and submit to the rebuttal panel a brief written statement in reply to the rebuttal statement submitted by the staff member. A copy of the reply to the rebuttal statement shall be placed in the staff member's official status file. Unless geographical location makes it impractical, the panel shall hear the staff member, the first and second appraising officers, and, at the discretion of the panel, other staff members who may have information relevant to the review of the appraisal rating.

27. The rebuttal panel shall prepare with maximum dispatch a brief report setting forth the reasons why the original appraisal rating should, or should not, be maintained. The report of the rebuttal panel shall be placed in the staff member's official status file. The performance rating resulting from the rebuttal process shall be binding on the head of the department or office and on the staff member concerned, subject to the ultimate authority of the Secretary-General as chief administrative officer of the Organization, who may review the matter as needed on the basis of the record.

28. The rating resulting from an appraisal that has not been rebutted, or from the rebuttal process, shall not be subject to further appeal. However, administrative decisions which stem from any final performance appraisal and which affect the conditions of service of a staff member may be appealed.

Entry into force

29. The present administrative instruction takes effect on 1 October 1995 and supersedes administrative instruction ST/AI/240/Rev.2, which, however, shall continue to govern performance evaluation reports for the period ending 31 December 1995 or 31 March 1996, depending on the appraisal cycle selected by the head of the department or office, pursuant to paragraph 3 above.

30. Every effort shall be made to complete performance evaluation reports under administrative instruction ST/AI/240/Rev.2 for all staff by 30 June 1996.

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Introductory phase-in period

31. In order to facilitate the full implementation of the PAS once the first full performance cycle begins for all staff members in 1996, staff members from the Under-Secretary-General level to the G-7 level (and corresponding levels in related categories) are required to participate in an introductory phase-in period. Many departments and offices have already introduced the system after their staff at those levels had received PAS training. Departments and offices that have not yet introduced PAS are required to do so no later than 1 October 1995.

32. The essential features of the introductory phase-in period are:

(a) The establishment of individual work plans for all staff members involved, covering the period ending either 31 December 1995 or 31 March 1996, depending on the appraisal cycle selected by the head of the department or office pursuant to paragraph 3 above;

(b) A brief review to confirm the individual work plans and discuss the performance to date, to be conducted in the middle of the relevant period;

(c) A performance appraisal to be conducted in the last month of that period.

33. The results of the appraisal made in the introductory phase-in period shall be taken into account in developing work plans for the performance year starting in 1996. The PAS rating for that period shall not be recorded in official status files, unless individual staff members make a request that it should be so included.

34. Executive Offices at Headquarters and heads of administration at all other duty stations shall manage and monitor the introductory phase-in period and the subsequent implementation of the full PAS system. The Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office shall establish a focal point to assist departments and offices.

PAS forms and guidelines

35. PAS forms, together with updated PAS guidelines, 3/ are available electronically and may be obtained through electronic mail or by requesting a copy on computer disc. The PAS forms use a WordPerfect macro-tool available in both English and French. A printed version of the forms and guidelines is also available from the relevant executive or personnel office for each of the departments and offices concerned.

Notes

- 1/ Direct supervisors act as first appraising officers in the PAS.
- 2/ The second appraising officer is the official in the department or office who supervises the first-level supervisor. The actual rank of the official depends on the structure of each department or office.
- 3/ The PAS guidelines are intended solely for guidance and information. The present instruction promulgates the rules establishing the rights and obligations of staff members. The text of this instruction shall prevail should there be any inconsistency between its provisions and the guidelines.
